



D5.3

The Downs School Admissions Policy

Introduction

The Downs is an inclusive school and no child will be refused entry on the grounds of race, religion or ability.

Children are admitted to The Downs at any age between 4 and 12 (Reception to Year 8).

The only restrictions placed on entry are those of number and the need to ensure that there is a match between the school and pupil. The ability level of each potential pupil and any special need that they may have is taken into account as it is essential that the school is able to provide appropriately for each child's needs.

In the event of a year group being full, a child's name is entered on the waiting list. This is operated on a first come, first served basis.

Pre Prep children are expected to progress into the Prep school, but the school reserves the right to refuse entry. All pupils are expected to remain at The Downs until they are 13 and have completed Year 8.

The Process

- Following an initial enquiry, a school prospectus and accompanying letter from the Headmaster is sent out. In doing so, prospective parents (PP's) are encouraged to visit The Downs and to meet the Headmaster
- In general, visits last two hours. During this time PP's meet the Headmaster, his wife and the Head of the Pre-Prep to discuss the philosophy of the school
- PP's are then given an extensive tour of the school largely by the Head of the Pre-Prep. They observe pupils in the classroom, view facilities, meet staff and talk to children informally
- Prospective Parents (PP's) of children Years 1-8 are then offered a 'taster day' for their child (children). During this taster day, prospective children are 'guided' by a pupil from The Downs. The prospective pupil

- experiences a normal school day but time is taken to informally assess their academic strengths.
- Children potentially joining the Reception Year are offered a 'taster morning', however, because the children are so young it is unusual for PP's to seize this opportunity. Rather they accept a place and take the chance for their children to join Familiarisation Mornings in the Summer Term. At this time groups of new and prospective children come and enjoy a morning (and lunch) to familiarise themselves with the new environment.
 - During a 'Taster Day', on permission being given by the parents, prospective children are informally assessed. Without causing unnecessary anxiety, their literacy and numeracy skills are evaluated by the use of INCAS. Additionally, PP's are asked to provide latest school reports. Further information about the Informal Assessment Process is available upon request.
 - Results of the 'Informal Assessment' are presented to parents during a debrief with the Headmaster at the conclusion of the Taster Day. Should the Headmaster offer a place at the school, it is confirmed in writing immediately after the visit.
 - Children who are not yet of school age or who cannot be offered places immediately are placed on an entry list. A registration fee of £100 must be provided to be placed on the list, this fee is **not** refundable.
 - When a child is registered parents are asked to confirm acceptance of the place within six months of the child's start at the school. A deposit of £400 is required and is refundable in the final invoice.

Induction of a new child

As has been stated, new children joining the Reception Year are encouraged to attend the Familiarisation Mornings held during the Summer Term. These mornings are proven to make the children's transition into full time education largely uneventful and more often enjoyable.

Children joining The Downs in other age groups are welcome to spend a day at the school – in addition to the 'Taster Day' – upon request.

During the holiday period previous to starting, new children will be contacted firstly in order to put them at ease but also to inform them of their guides (Y1 to Y8). 'Guides' are pupils in the same class as the new children whose task is to help the new child settle down with as few anxieties as possible. They are carefully chosen and are often already known to the children.

1 Admissions Register

The school Admission's Register is managed the Registrar. Alongside the register the Registrar keeps a paper trail of communication with the LA.

The Registrar is kept well informed of any ISI updates or statutory by the Headmaster. For further information on the process of admissions please see Missing Child Policy 6.5.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The process of admissions is carefully monitored by the Registrar and Headmaster. An evaluation of the process is made by questionnaire and parent interview.

Marcus Gunn
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